LIMITED

WRD/MKG/INF/L.75 Rev.1
2 February 1962

ORIGINAL : FRENCH

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

CAMBODIA, LAOS, THAILAND AND VIET-NAM

Committee for Co-ordination of Investigations
of the Lower Mekong Basin
Sixteenth Session (Plenary)
3 - 8 January 1962
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

MEKONG PROJECT

PLAN OF OPERATION FOR THE FRENCH BAUXITE PROSPECTION MISSION IN THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN

(Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet-Nam)

PLAN OF OPERATION FOR THE FRENCH BAUXITE PROSPECTION MISSION IN THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viêt-Nam)

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The overall programme of investigations of mineral resources of the Lower Mekong basin, as defined by the Mekong Committee with the assistance of the minerals expert provided by France, (document WRD/MKG/INF/R.42 Rev.2) includes (a) a regional project for the investigation of known occurrences of mineral resources, to be financed in part by the United Nations Special Fund, and (b) a regional project for bauxite prospection.

The discovery of workable bauxite deposits in the basin or in adjacent areas within its economic sphere would represent an enormously valuable asset for industrialization prospects, considering the high consumption of electric energy required to process bauxite for the production of aluminium.

As the United Nations Special Fund cannot finance the prospection of minerals of which no occurrences have yet been reported in the Mekong Basin, France offered to undertake bauxite investigation for the Committee, using for that purpose half of the contribution offered by France at the sixteenth session of ECAFE.

The Mekong Committee accepted that suggestion at its eleventh session.

II. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Purpose

The purpose of the project is defined in Annex I of the Mekong Committee's general "Programme of mineral resources development" (WRD/MKG/INF/R.42 Rev.2).

This is a first-phase prospection mission, i.e. a general exploration project to determine the possible existence of bauxite in the basin and adjacent areas.

Present knowledge

Although no direct occurrence of bauxite has been reported so far in the basin, the following facts provide favourable indirect clues:

/ Fossil

- Fossil bauxite is to be found outside the basin (Tonkin) in geological conditions which may occur in the basin;
- The basin has a tropical climate;
- Within the Mekong Basin, certain weathered red soils on basaltic pleateaus have revealed high alumina contents during tests conducted for agricultural purposes;
- Finally, no prospection for bauxite has ever been attempted so far in the basin.

Suggested methods

A geological expert with considerable experience of bauxite prospection and photogeology would be assigned to an exploration mission of a maximum duration of two years, i.e. two ten-month prospection campaigns.

The following means would be placed at the disposal of the expert:

- Photogeological investigation of the basin as a whole, with a view to determining favourable topographic conditions on the basis of existing geological data, in particular the 1/500,000 geological map re-edited by the Viêt-Nam Geological Department with the assistance of the French Government.
- Contacts with geologists prospecting other minerals in the basin, in order to obtain maximum information on geology and geomorphology in their operation areas (samples to be sent).
- Direct prospection by the expert of the areas determined on the basis of the abovementioned data.
- Chemical analysis of samples.
- Organization of prospection camps on favourable occurrences.

III. OBLIGATIONS

A) France shall finance the bauxite prospection mission by means of an allocation of N.F. 250,000, representing half of the assistance provided by France for the Mekong Project in 1960. This allocation shall enable the French Bureau of Geological and Mining Research to carry out a bauxite prospection mission, to which the Bureau will assign a geology expert for a period of two years.

/ Complete

- Complete equipment of the mission for camping, prospection and transport;
- Finance for all chemical analyses and expenses relating thereto;
- Resources required for supplies and transport of persons and equipment within each country;
- Recruiting of the local personnel required by the mission (one driver and a small team of labourers who could be speedly trained);
- Cost of reproduction of aerial photographic coverage as mentioned in Section III(C).

The mission shall start by a photogeological survey, including field control operations, to be carried out necessarily in each of the four countries, beginning with Thailand.

The expert of the French Bureau of Geological and Mining Research shall submit to the Executive Agent, for the Committee, and to National Mining Departments quarterly geological reports indicating work effected and results obtained, as well as a final report on the mission.

B) Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet-Nam each undertake, insofar as they are respectively concerned,

- to appoint a mining engineer or geologist or otherwise a prospector to assist the expert provided by France;
- to make available to the expert in each capital city appropriate office space for photogeological investigations, and storage of samples and equipment;
- to facilitate the contacts of the expert with the other geologists working on their national territory for other purposes (geological missions financed by the United Nations Special Fund or by bilateral programmes); to point out to the expert the characteristic aspects of geological conditions encountered by those mission and to communicate to the expert the samples discovered as well as their technical reports, after having been cleared with proper authorities concerned.
- to make available to the expert, as a loan from the National Geographic Departments aerial photographic coverage of specific areas in the basin and adjacent areas pertaining to the study of this project;
- to execute, at cost price, the analyses requested by the expert in the chemical laboratories of the National Mining Departments;
- finally, should the expert discover a bauxite occurrence which he deems to be particularly promising, to provide through the Mining Departments of the country in whose territory the discovery has been made, sufficient labour

/ (unskilled

(unskilled labourers) for adequate investigation of the occurrence. The Mining Department concerned shall also assign to the prospect under investigation, at its own cost, as many national technicians as it will judge advisable to recruit to ensure that the investigation work be adequately followed up by competent national technicians, after completion of the two prospection campaigns by the expert provided by France.

C) The Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin shall make available to the bauxite mission, at its request, the aerial photography coverage of the basin executed for the Mekong Project inter alia under the Canadian participating programme.

The Committee's Executive Agent will provide, from the petroleum products contributed by the Government of Iran, the fuel required for the automobile transport of the expert in the zones under investigation, except for handling charges, to be met by France.

The Committee's Executive Agent shall provide the cooperation of his office for the mission of the bauxite expert, and shall facilitate cooperation both with the relevant services of ECAFE and with the various Mekong bilateral or multilateral assistance projects for mineral investigation and industrial development. He shall undertake to provide the English translation of the bauxite expert's report.

IV. PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES

The expert provided by France shall have the right to the following privileges and immunities:

(a) Immunity from legal process in respect of all acts performed by him in the execution of the Project;

(b) Immunity from national service obligations;

(c) Immunity from immigration restrictions;

(d) The privilege of bringing into the country reasonable amounts of foreign currency for the purposes of the Project or for personal use, and of withdrawing any such amounts brought into the country, or, in accordance with the relevant foreign exchange regulations, such amounts as may be earned therein by him in the execution of the Project;

/(e)

(e) The same repatriation facilities in the event of international crises as diplomatic envoys; and

(f) Inviolability for all papers and documents relating to the Project.

The Governments shall either exempt from or bear the cost of any taxes, duties, fees or levies which they may impose on the expert provided by France in respect of:

(a) The salary earned by said expert in the execution of the Project;

(b) Any prospection equipment, including one landrover, materials and supplies brought into the country in connection with the Project or which, after having been brought into the country, may be subsequently withdrawn therefrom; and

(c) As in the case of concessions currently granted to the United Nations experts in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viêt-Nam, any property brought, including one privately owned automobile, by said expert for his personal use or consumption or which, after having been brought into the country, may subsequently be withdrawn therefrom upon departure of said expert. If despite this paragraph import duties are nevertheless collected, then the Government making the collection shall make an equivalent cash payment to the expert provided by France.

(d) Any equipment of the mission, including means of transport, as well as the geology expert's personal property, brought into any of the signatory countries of this Plan of Operation, may be brought over the border, free of customs duties, into any other of the signatory countries.

The privileges and immunities to which the expert provided by France may be entitled, may be waived by the French Government where, in its opinion, the immunity would impede the course of justice and can be waived without prejudice to the successful completion of the Project or to the interests of the French Government.

/V. SIGNATURES

V. SIGNATURES

AGREED, on behalf of the Parties, by the undersigned:

Date:_____

For the Government of Cambodia

Date:_____

For the Government of Laos

Date:_____

For the Government of Thailand

Date:_____

For the Government of the Republic of Viêt-Nam

Date:_____

For the Government of France

Date:_____

Executive Agent
Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong Basin